



Australian Bureau of Statistics

Education Services

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Resources



MAT 04 – Country of Birth

You can download this activity, the teacher solutions and the assessment rubric as a rich text file (RTF) at the bottom of the page.

Subject Area

Mathematics

Overview

This classroom activity involves comparing births and deaths from 2000-2005. Students are asked to create a bar graph (both on graph paper and using a spreadsheet package) and identify patterns in the data. On completion of this activity students will be able to use a bar graph to display discrete bivariate data and be able to read and interpret data presented in tables and bar graphs. Students will also develop an understanding of the importance of collecting statistics.

Requirements

- Calculator
- Computer with Spreadsheet software program (optional)

Instructions

Background

Australia's population includes people from more than 150 countries. Table 1, taken from the Year Book Australia, 2007, lists the main countries of birth of Australians from 1954 to 2005. It shows in 1000's:

- the number of people born in each country in 1000's
- the total population born overseas
- the Australian born population
- the total Australian population.

Main Countries of Birth of the Population ('000)

	1954(a)	1961(a)	1971(a)	1981(a)	1995(b)	2005(b)
United Kingdom(c)	664.2	755.4	1,081.3	1,075.8	1,220.9	1,137.4
New Zealand	43.4	47.0	74.1	160.7	304.2	455.1
Italy	119.9	228.3	288.3	275.0	261.6	224.3
China	10.3	14.5	17.1	25.2	107.2	191.2
Vietnam	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	40.7	157.8	177.7
India	12.0	14.2	28.7	41.0	80.0	138.7
Philippines	0.2	0.4	2.3	14.8	98.3	129.4
Greece	25.9	77.3	159.0	145.8	142.3	127.2
Germany	65.4	109.3	110.0	109.3	120.1	115.2
South Africa	6.0	7.9	12.2	26.5	58.8	113.8
Malaysia	2.3	5.8	14.4	30.5	82.8	100.3
Netherlands	52.0	102.1	98.6	95.1	96.1	87.7
Lebanon	3.9	7.3	23.9	49.4	77.1	85.3
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	1.6	3.5	5.4	15.3	76.6	76.2
Total overseas-born	1,285.8	1,778.3	2,545.9	2,950.9	4,164.1	4,829.5
Total Australian born	7,700.1	8,729.4	10,173.1	11,388.8	13,907.7	15,499.1
Total population(d)	8,986.5	10,508.2	12,719.5	14,516.9	18,071.8	20,328.6

TABLE 1: Source ABS Year Book Australia 2007

(a) Census counts. (b) Estimated resident population at 30 June. For 2005, data are preliminary. (c) Includes Ireland in 1954, 1961 and 1971. (d) Includes country of birth 'Not stated' and 'At sea'.

Task One: How has the percentage of migrants changed over time?

1. For the selected years between 1954 and 2005, calculate the total number of Australians born overseas as a

percentage of the total Australian population
(e.g. in 1971, the total number of overseas born Australians as a percentage of the total Australian population = $2,545,900 \div 12,719,500 \times 100$ = 20.2%).
a. Show the percentages in a table.
b. Show the working out for at least one of your results.

2. From the table construct a line graph on graph paper or using a spread sheet package. Make sure that your graph has equal intervals on both axes.

3. Describe the change in the percentage of Australians born overseas from 1955 – 2005.

Task Two: What are the main countries of origin of migrants to Australia?

4. For the selected years between 1954 – 2005, calculate the percentage of overseas born Australians, by country, of the total number of overseas born Australians for at least five of the countries listed.
e.g. for 1961, the number of people born in the UK as a percentage of the total number of people born overseas = $755,400 \div 1,778,300 \times 100$ = 42.5%).
This can be done efficiently using a spread sheet package and the Fill Down function.

5. For the first five countries on the list, construct a line graph to show the change over time in birthplace as a percentage of the total number of overseas born Australians. This should be constructed on graph paper or using a spread sheet.

Note: If there is a particular country of interest to you that is not in the top 5, you can negotiate with your teacher to include it in your graph.

6. For each year listed, from which country did most overseas born Australians originate?

7. What changes have there been in the main countries from which Australian residents come?

8. Explain why the number of people born in the UK has increased while the percentage born in the UK has decreased.

Extension

9. What do you think the two graphs will look like for the period 2005-2025? Why do you think they will look like this?

References

- Social Dataset 4 in the Education Services pages contains the most recent data.
- History Dataset 1 in the Education Services pages has a visualisation of country of birth, median age and sex ratio
- Migration Australia (cat. no. 3412.0)

Note: Links to ABS publications are to the most recent release. Previous releases can be accessed by selecting the 'Past & Future Releases' tab.

Glossary

Year Book Australia, 2007 (cat. no. 1301.0)

Downloads

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